

The Progressive Farmer

AND THE COTTON PLANT.

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CURRENT EVENTS: THE TREND OF THINGS AS WE SEE IT.

Tranquil, dreamy and restful are these early autumn days; and the oftentimes turbulent stream of our human activities seems to have borrowed something of the calm and serenity of this glorious season of the harvest moon. In the Far East the war drum throbs no longer; in the world of commerce and industry there is unusual quiet; in politics we have almost another "era of good feeling." But it is the silent forces that count for most; and the world has been making headway without making noise. The schools have opened again, and millions of our American men and women of to-morrow are being trained for greater usefulness—a fact of far greater significance than all the strikes and battles and murders that fill the sensational papers. The earth has brought forth abundantly and our farmers are reaping a plenteous harvest—but not so much is said about this as would be said about a blight or pestilence in one county. And we ought to be thankful after all that it is so that it is the good things of life that are common, and the bad things that are so uncommon as to be "news."

Mr. Rockefeller's Interview.

News was so scarce last week that people gave about as much attention to John D. Rockefeller's interview on how he has made his money, as they gave to anything else. In olden days Diogenes went through the streets of Athens in broad daylight, lantern in hand, looking for an honest man; and the principal object of Mr. Rockefeller in coming into the limelight seems to have been to announce himself in case anyone should play the Diogenes trick in these days. The secret of his success, he says, is that he has always been exceedingly honest. And Mr. Rockefeller is a good, pious man, according to this first-hand testimony. An Indianapolis man once pointed out Senator Beveridge to a visitor, saying, "There's the smartest man in Indiana." "Can you prove it?" asked the visitor. "Don't have to prove it," was the reply, "he admits it." So we don't have to prove that Mr. Rockefeller is a good man; he admits it.

A Little Sermon by the Way.

The pitiful part of all this is to find a religious weekly in its last issue speaking of the "high Christian character" of Mr. Rockefeller, merely because he goes to church and doesn't swear or drink or gamble or get into jail. It is just this conception of religion as a piece of formalism that the Master seems to us to have given most of his time on earth to uprooting. The Pharisees of his day were professedly pious, wealthy, and church-goers; but He was not satisfied with their "high Christian character." Rather, we hear, "Woe unto you, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." And for the cloak of piety with which they sought to cover their wickedness, he had no more respect: "Ye devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

We have no doubt that Mr. Rockefeller is what is called a clean man in his private life, but it takes a great deal more than that to make Christian character. Some men are mad with passion and some are mad with greed; and it seems to us that our time needs no lesson more than that our lust of wealth (which crushes out "judgment,

mercy and faith," although prudence makes us "moral") really leaves us at heart no better than the man with strong passions or weaker will who sins more openly and makes no long prayers.

The commandment which has always had Mr. Rockefeller's profoundest respect is the eleventh: "Thou shalt not get caught up with." He has usually managed to keep this. But he has robbed men just as surely as any highwayman ever did. He has "devoured widows' houses" as sanctimoniously as any Pharisee ever did. He has shown as little mercy or justice to his competitors as any criminal would. And we have no more respect for the "high Christian character" of a man whose lust of wealth leads him into doing these things that we have for any ordinary publican and sinner of our street corners.

The Internal Revenue Frauds.

For a long time there have been rumors of fraud in the internal revenue service in Western North Carolina, and the matter came before the public more prominently last spring when Editor Deal of the Wilkesboro Chronicle printed specific charges and was brutally assaulted as a result. In Greensboro two weeks ago indictments were returned against twenty-eight revenue officials, and it is believed that District Attorney Holton and Judge Boyd will prosecute them to the limit of the law. There is no doubt but that a full investigation would bring out a great crop of sensations. The general public has long believed that many of the storekeepers and guagers are in league with distillers and moonshiners for the purpose of defrauding the government, and a few jail sentences would doubtless do much to bring about a better order of things.

After Whiskey Medicines.

Speaking of whiskey frauds reminds us, too, that one of the most common whiskey frauds is the sale as "medicine" of many preparations that contain no notable ingredients except whiskey. It is interesting therefore to observe that the Commissioners of Internal Revenue last week "reversed a ruling of his Department made many years ago, and now decides that the manufacturers of these medicines must take out licenses are rectifiers and liquor dealers, and that druggists and others handling them will have to pay the usual retail liquor dealers' license. The Commissioner, in a letter of instruction to collectors of internal revenue, says that there are a number of compounds on the market going under the names of medicines that are composed chiefly of distilled spirits, without the addition of drugs or medicines in sufficient quantities to change materially the character of the whiskey."

The Farmers' National Congress.

The twenty-fifth annual session of the Farmers' National Congress in Richmond last week brought together delegates from twenty-nine States, and the program included a number of notable addresses. Congressman Livingston, of Georgia, in an exhaustive paper arraigned the present tariff as one of the most serious drawbacks to the prosperity of American agriculture. Secretary J. Bryan Grimes of North Carolina delivered an address showing great research on "The Agricultural Resources of the South," which we wish we had space to print in full. Thursday there was a discussion of immigration, pro and con, resulting in the passage of a resolution protesting against the admission or immigrants of the pauper and criminal classes.

Other resolutions adopted include one introduced by the writer asking for national aid in combating Texas or tick fever in the South; one by Col. J. Bryan Grimes urging the establishment of the parcels post; one favoring the income tax and popular election of Senators; and one in regard to railway rate legislation which we print in full:

"We favor the active enforcement by the general government of all existing laws in order to prevent the giving or accepting of rebates or special favors (through whatever devices), to or by favored shippers, and whereas, we expect that the Inter-State Commerce Commission will aggressively and promptly apply all remedies at their disposal; now, therefore,

"Resolved, That if the existing laws for the detection and punishment of the giving or acceptance of such rebates or special favors are insufficient or defective in any respect, we favor the enactment of such further legislation as may be necessary adequately to deal with the evil and to prevent such practices in the future."

The following are the officers for the next two years:

President, J. M. Stahl, of Illinois; First Vice President, Benahan Cameron, of North Carolina; Second Vice President, Joshua Strange, of Indiana; Treasurer, A. H. Judy, of Ohio; Secretary, G. M. Whitaker, of Massachusetts.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PHASE OF THE COTTON SITUATION.

The most significant phase of the cotton situation is the remarkably early opening of the crop. Everybody knows that the yield is very much smaller than last year, but the government report shows that ginning receipts are heavier than they were to this date last season. Around Raleigh we notice that in some places three-fourths of the crop is ready for picking. At the Asheville meeting we heard similar conditions reported from other States, and in Richmond last week President Jordan told the writer that the early opening is general throughout the Cotton Belt.

Now this condition, it seems to us, cannot fail to have its effect upon the market. Early opening means early ginning—heavy receipts in all the gineries in the early part of the season; and the general public is likely to have this increase in ginning receipts as indicating a large crop of cotton. Last year's crop proved to be so much heavier than anybody suspected prior to the Government's December report, that the cotton world will be ready to jump at the conclusion that this season's yield may also have been underestimated.

With this unusual condition of the crop favoring the plans of the bears, therefore, it is quite likely that they may be able to keep down the price of cotton below its true value until the actual size of the crop becomes known—that is to say, until the inevitable decline in ginning receipts proves that the crop is really a small one.

For it is really a small crop—no doubt of that. The Government condition figures with the Government acreage estimate, as we said last week, indicate a crop of only 9,976,333 bales; with the Cotton Association's acreage estimate 9,562,514 bales. If the Cotton Association had based its estimate solely on the condition of the crop reported to it—seventy-three per cent of last year—it would have predicted only 8,500,000 bales instead of 9,500,000.

To sum up: the crop is small, but the heavy ginning receipts early in the season may keep prices below what they should be. If so, they will advance to higher levels after the real size of the crop becomes known.

And unless there is a phenomenally favorable season from now on, it looks to us as if farmers have everything to gain and nothing to lose by holding for higher prices.

A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.

What are the great faults of conversation? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoils more good talk than anything else: long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain ultimatums of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source.—From "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," by Oliver Wendell Holmes.